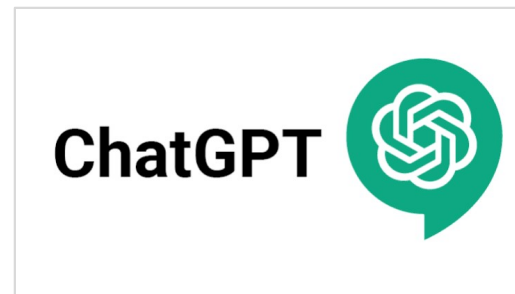


UX Professionals' Trust in AI for UX Research

Where trust is strongest, where it breaks down, and why human oversight remains essential



Presented by Theresa Wilkinson

UX Professionals' Trust in AI for UX Research



Agenda

1. Executive Summary
2. Overall Trust Ratings
3. Summary of Key Results
4. Statistical Summary and Key Insights
5. Implications for UX Researchers
6. Findings

Executive Summary

Purpose & Background

This study examined which UX research activities professionals trust AI to support, where that trust declines, and how much human review AI-generated work requires.

NN/g recommends using AI to assist existing UX workflows rather than handing entire workflows over to AI. It also cautions that AI may support research analysis but should not lead the interpretation.

Methods / Participants

- Platform: Google Forms
- Participants: 34 UX professionals
- Recruitment: LinkedIn and professional contacts
- Survey: 10 questions
- Trust measure: Five-point scale from *Not at all* to *Completely*
- Activities evaluated: Nine UX research activities

Source: Nielsen Norman Group, *Using AI for UX Work: Study Guide* (2026)

Overall Trust Ratings

Rank	UX Research Activity	Mean Trust
1	Developing research questions	4.32
2	Creating participant screeners	4.24
2	Developing usability-test tasks	4.24
4	Creating stakeholder summaries/reports	3.97
5	Developing recommendations	3.85
6	Drawing conclusions	3.09
7	Analyzing quantitative data	2.97
8	Identifying patterns	2.91
9	Analyzing qualitative data	2.85

Five-point scale: 1 = Not at all; 5 = Completely

Summary

Trust was highest for creating research materials and lowest for analysis and interpretation.

Summary of Key Results

Trust Was Highest for Research Planning

- Research questions: **88% (30 of 34)** rated Very or Completely
- Participant screeners: **85% (29 of 34)**
- Usability-test tasks: **85% (29 of 34)**

Human Oversight Remained Essential

- Encountered an AI error: **94% (32 of 34)**
- Required substantial or complete review: **88% (30 of 34)**
- Comfortable presenting after review: **94% (32 of 34)**

Summary

Participants trusted AI to assist with research but expected humans to review and verify its work.

Statistical Summary and Key Insights

Statistical Analysis

- Trust differed significantly across the nine activities.
- Friedman $\chi^2(8) = 167.69$, $p < .001$
- Kendall's $W = .62$, indicating a large difference.
- No reliable trust differences were found by professional role or experience.
- More-frequent AI users reported greater trust in research planning and stakeholder summaries, but not in analysis or interpretation.

Key Insights

- AI was trusted as an assistant, not an authority.
- Trust was strongest for planning, drafting, and reporting.
- Trust declined when interpretation and judgment were required.
- Participants were comfortable presenting AI-assisted work after reviewing it.

Overall Takeaway

UX professionals will use AI—but they do not trust it without human oversight.

Implications for UX Researchers

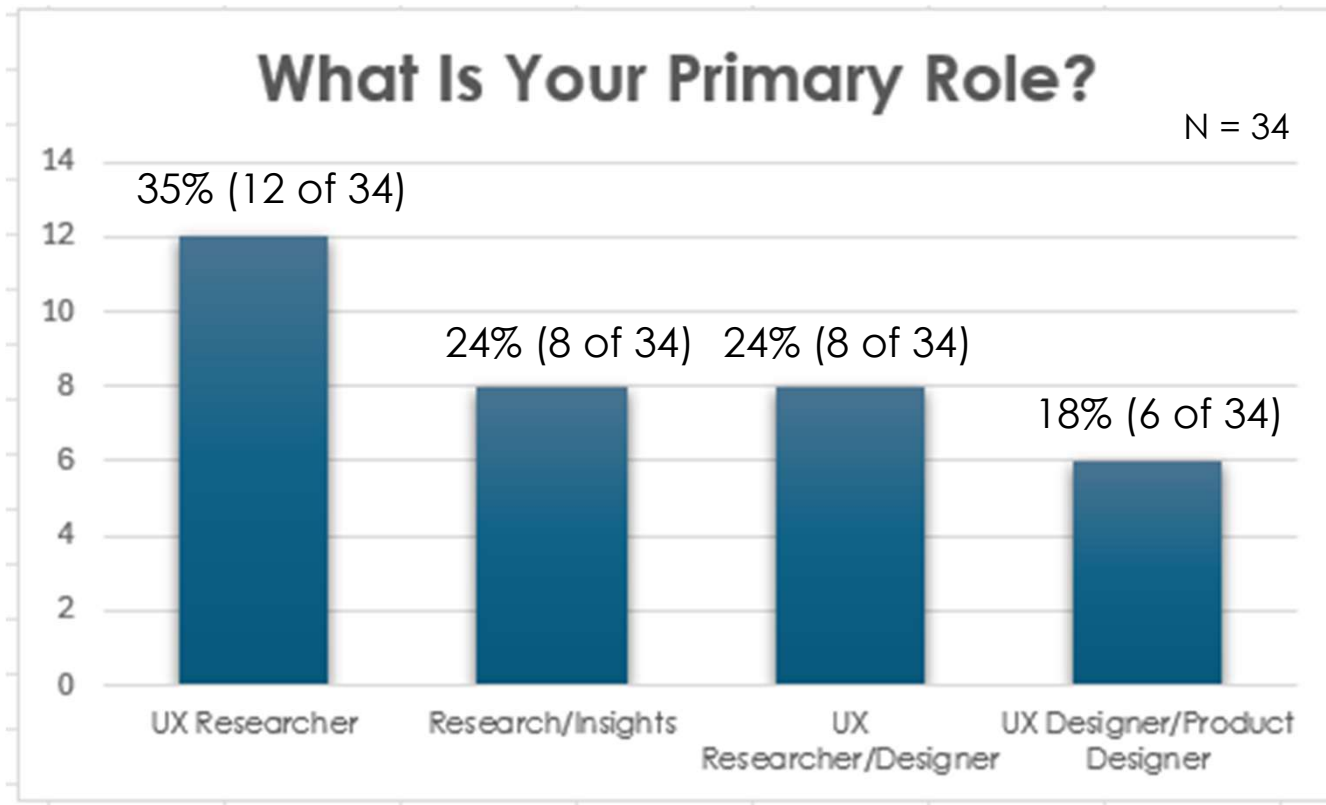
- AI can support research planning, drafting, summarizing, and reporting.
- AI-generated analysis, patterns, and conclusions require greater scrutiny.
- Frequent AI use may increase trust, but increased trust does not guarantee accuracy.
- Researchers must independently verify numbers, sources, interpretations, and recommendations.
- Human researchers remain responsible for the quality and credibility of the final work.

Overall Implication

AI can extend a researcher's capabilities, but interpretation, verification, judgment, and accountability must remain human-led.

Findings

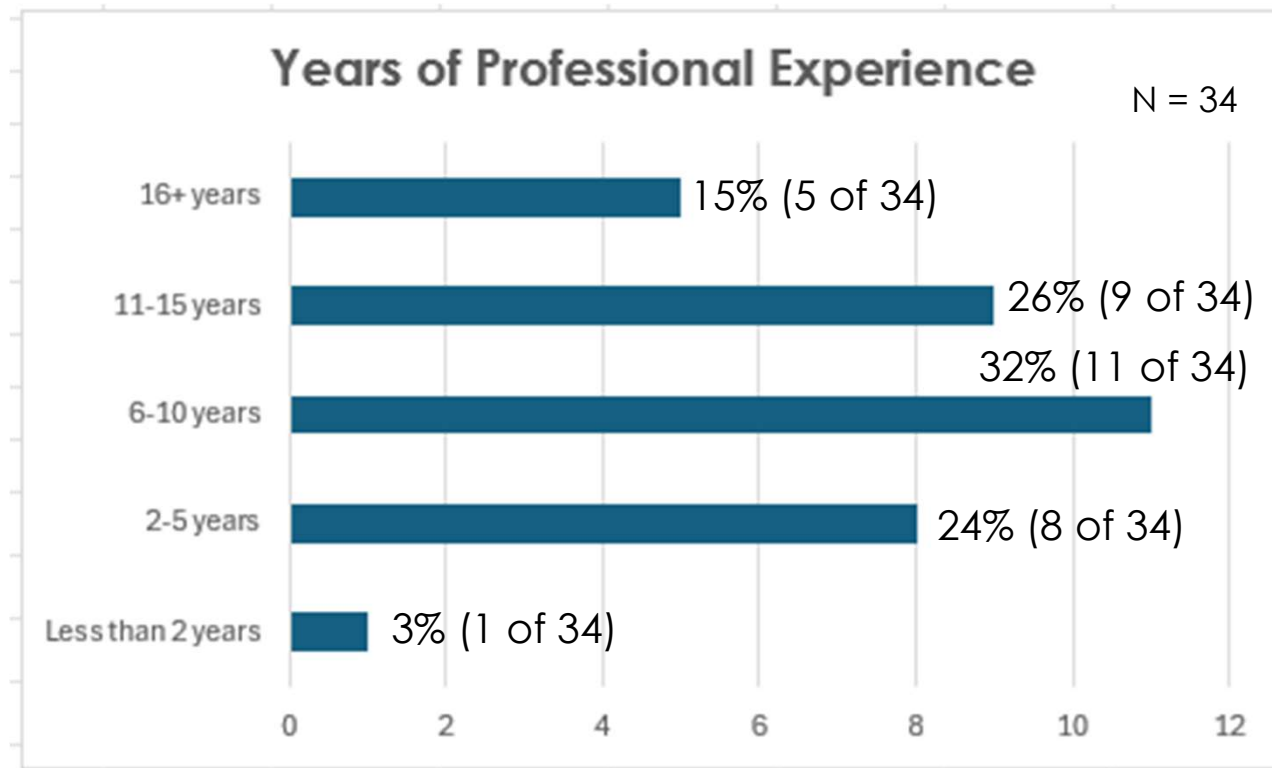
Question 1: What Is Your Primary Role?



Key Finding

UX Researchers were the largest group, but the sample represented four different UX and research roles.

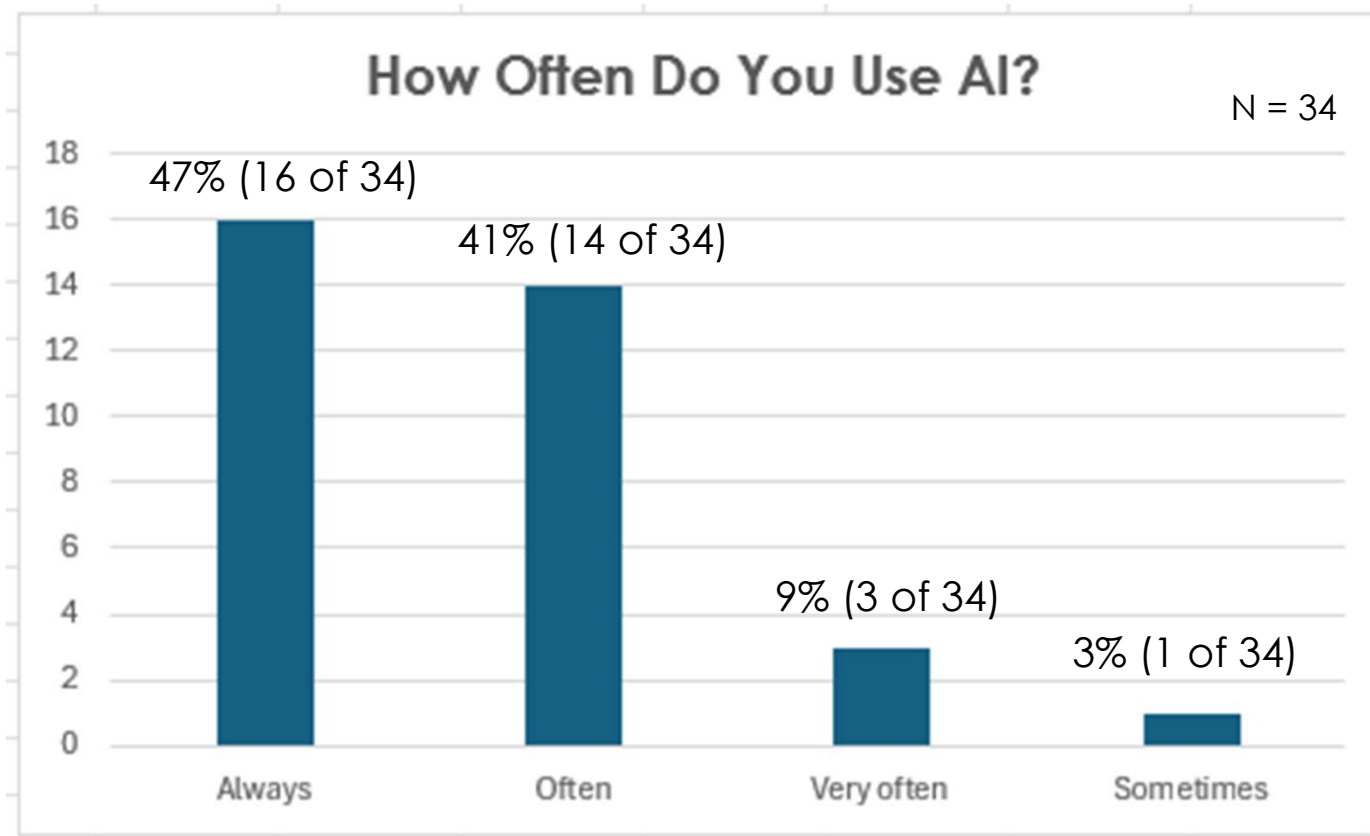
Question 2: Years of Professional Experience



Key Finding

Most participants were experienced UX professionals: 74% (25 of 34) had at least six years of professional experience.

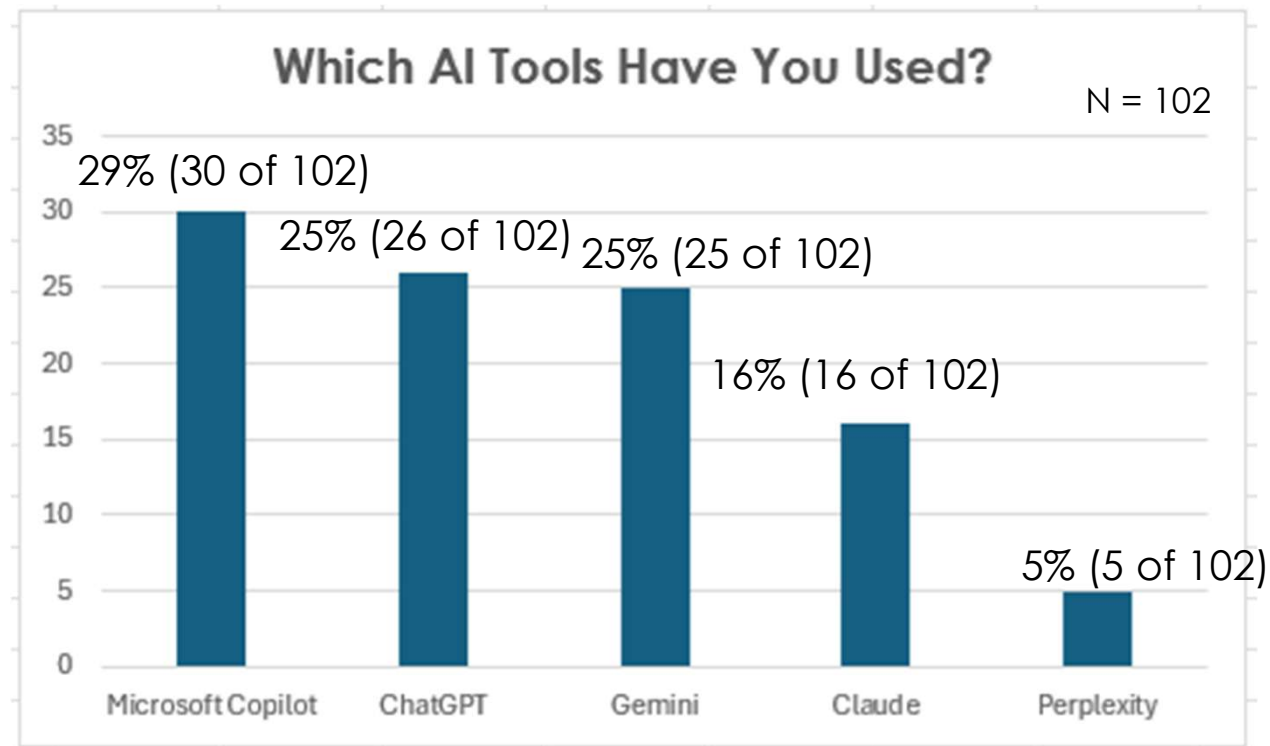
Question 3: How Often Do You Use AI?



Key Finding

AI use was nearly universal: 97% (33 of 34) used it often, very often, or always for UX research work.

Question 4: Which AI Tools Have You Used?



Participants could select more than one tool.

Key Finding

Microsoft Copilot was the most commonly used tool, followed by ChatGPT.

Question 5: Overall Trust in AI

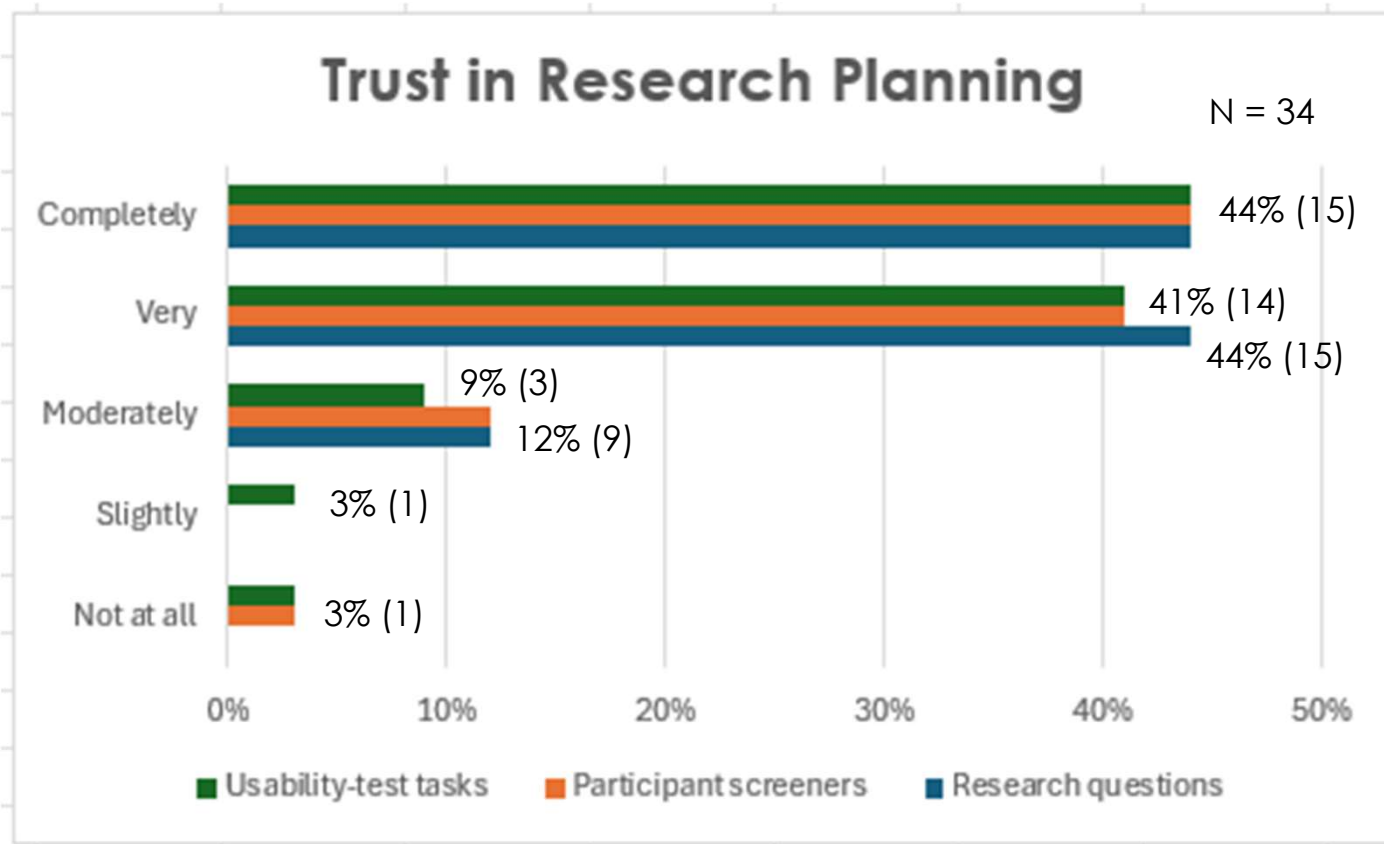
Activity	Mean Trust
Developing research questions	4.32
Creating participant screeners	4.24
Developing usability-test tasks	4.21
Creating stakeholder summaries/reports	4.09
Developing recommendations	3.82
Drawing conclusions	3.09
Identifying patterns	2.91
Analyzing quantitative data	2.88
Analyzing qualitative data	2.85

Five-point scale: 1 = Not at all; 5 = Completely

Key Finding

Trust was highest for creating research materials and lowest for analyzing and interpreting evidence.

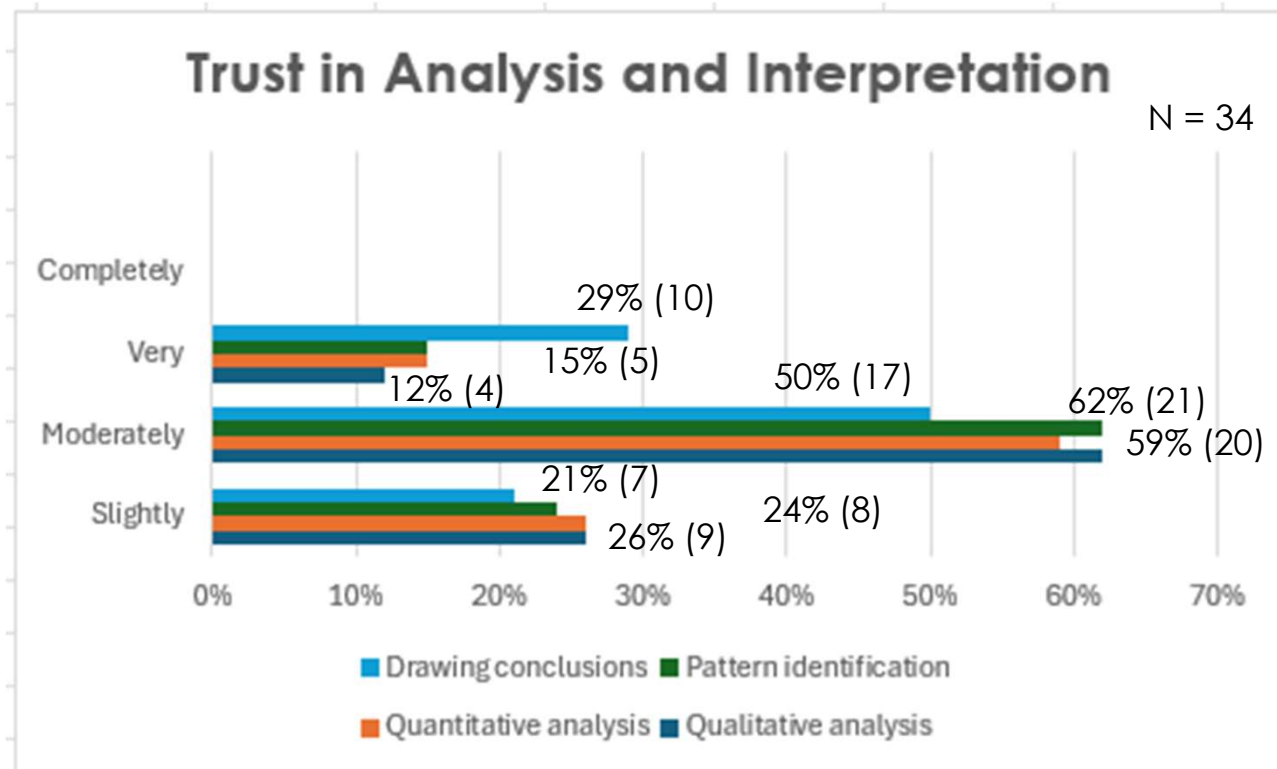
Question 5: Overall Trust in Research Planning



Key Finding

Trust in research planning was high. Between 85% and 88% of participants trusted AI very much or completely for developing research questions, participant screeners, and usability-test tasks.

Question 5: Trust in Analysis and Interpretation

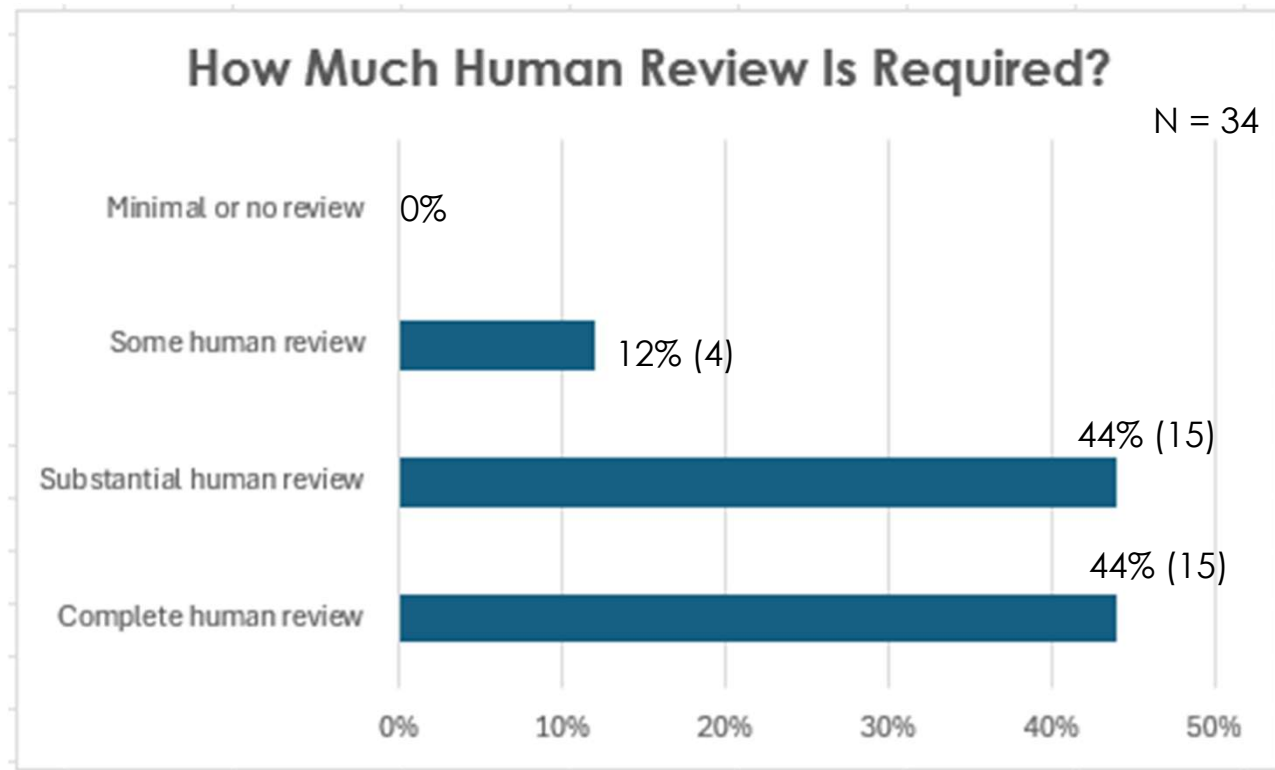


Key Finding

No participant completely trusted AI with analysis, pattern identification, or drawing conclusions. **This finding is consistent with NN/g's recommendation that AI can assist with research analysis, but should not lead the interpretation (Kohler, 2026).**

Kohler, T. (2026, September 4). *Using AI for UX Work: Study Guide*. Nielsen Norman Group.

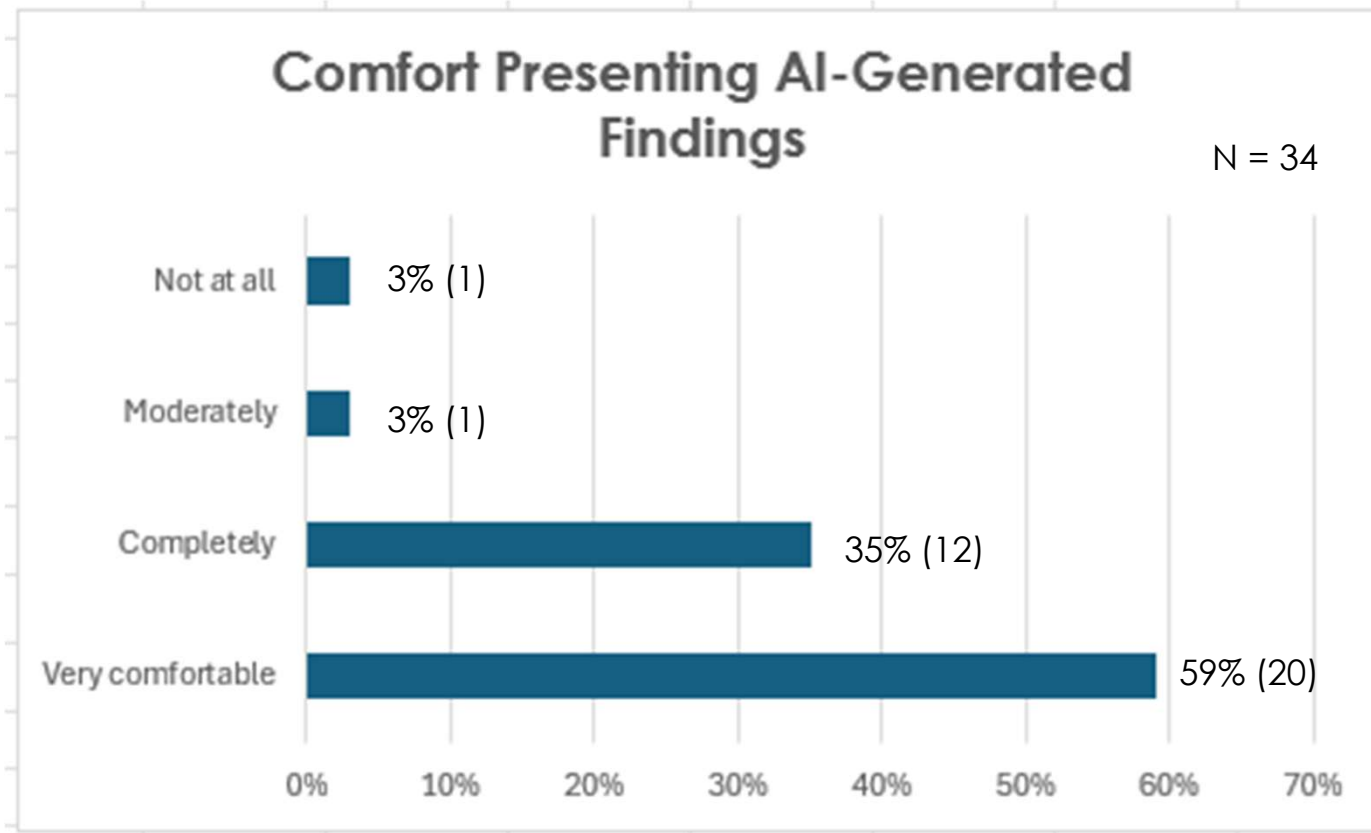
Question 6: How Much Human Review Is Required?



Key Finding

Every participant believed AI-generated UX research requires human review, and 88% (30 of 34) required substantial or complete review.

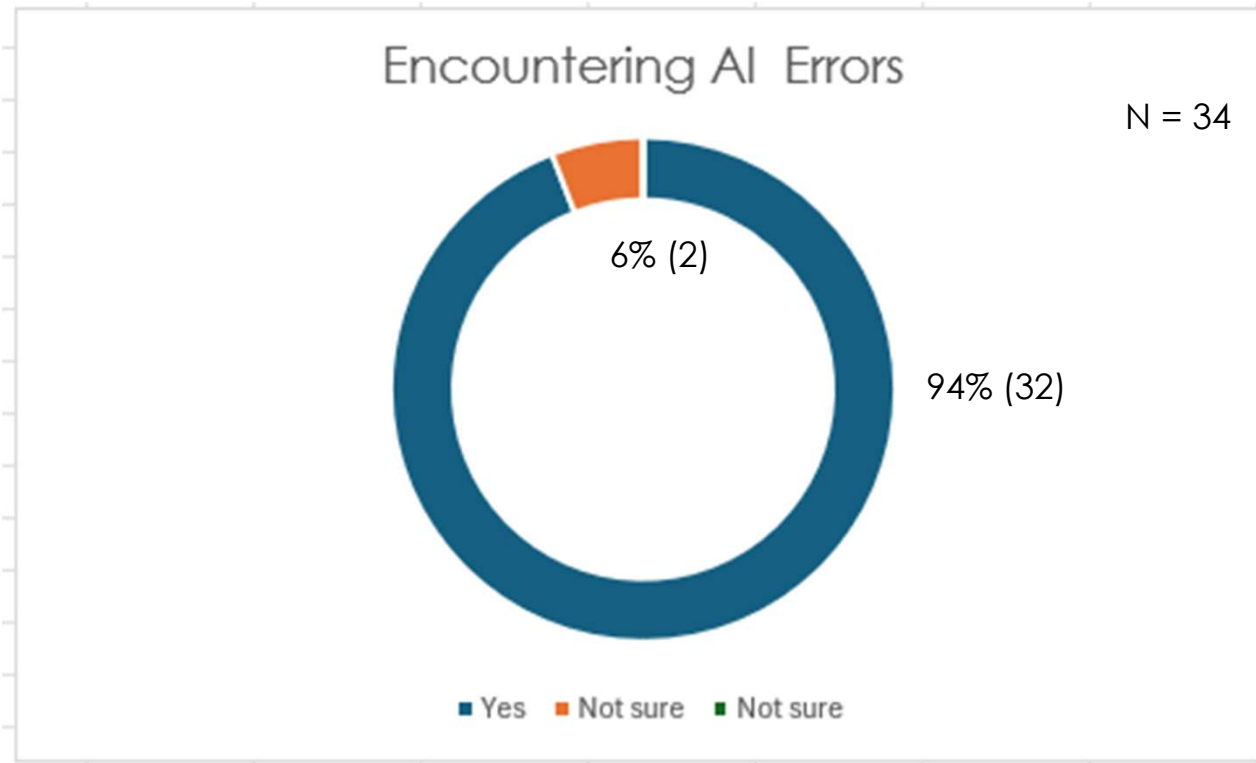
Question 7: Comfort Presenting AI-Generated Findings



Key Finding

After personally reviewing the work, 94% (32 of 34) were very or completely comfortable presenting AI-generated findings.

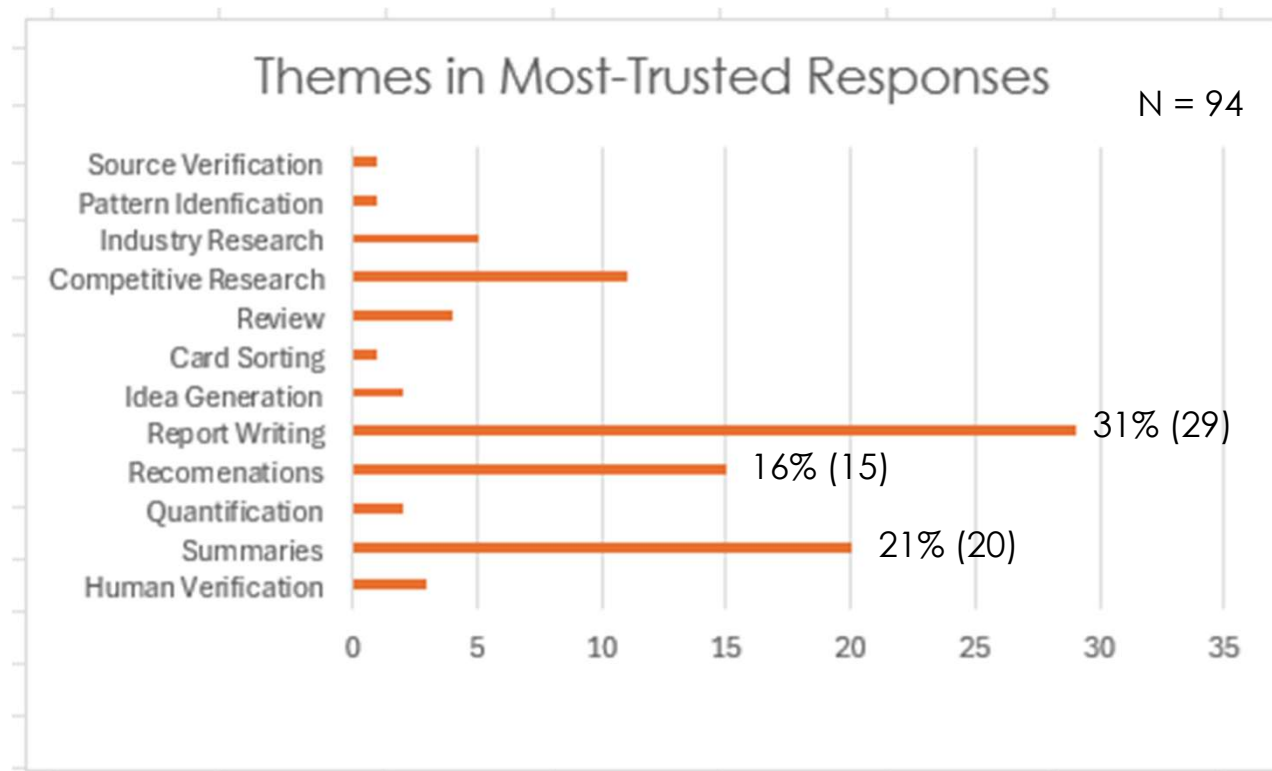
Question 8: Encountering AI Errors



Key Finding

Nearly every participant had encountered an error or unsupported conclusion in AI-generated UX research work.

Question 9: Themes in Most-Trusted Responses

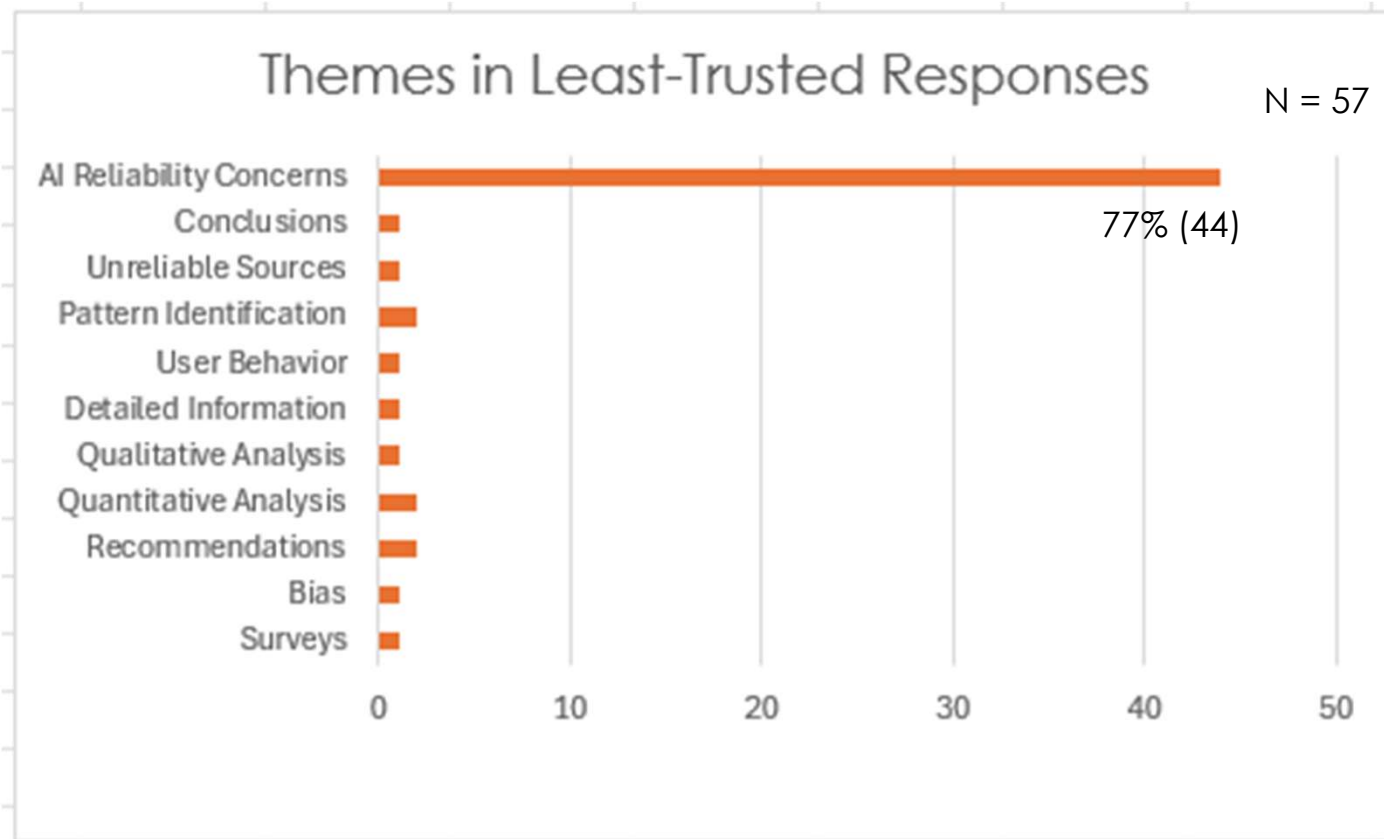


Responses could include more than one coded theme.

Key Finding

Report writing was mentioned most often, followed by summaries, recommendations, and competitive research.

Question 10: Themes in Least-Trusted Responses



Responses could include more than one coded theme.

Key Finding

AI reliability concerns accounted for 77% (44 of 57) of coded mentions.

Participant Profile
How the Nine Research
Activities Were Grouped

Appendix

Participant Profile

The survey included participants from four professional-role groups:

- **UX Researcher:** 35% (12 of 34)
- **Research/Insights:** 24% (8 of 34)
- **UX Researcher/Designer:** 24% (8 of 34)
- **UX Designer/Product Designer:** 18% (6 of 34)

Most participants had substantial professional experience:

- **Less than 2 years:** 3% (1 of 34)
- **2–5 years:** 24% (8 of 34)
- **6–10 years:** 32% (11 of 34)
- **11–15 years:** 26% (9 of 34)
- **16 or more years:** 15% (5 of 34)

Overall, 74% (25 of 34) had at least six years of professional UX or research experience. This was therefore a highly experienced group of participants.

How the Nine Research Activities Were Grouped

Survey Activity	Chart
Developing research questions	Overall Trust in Research Planning
Creating participant screeners	Overall Trust in Research Planning
Developing usability-test tasks	Overall Trust in Research Planning
Creating stakeholder summaries/reports	Overall Trust in AI
Developing recommendations	Overall Trust in AI
Drawing conclusions	Trust in Analysis and Interpretation
Analyzing quantitative data	Trust in Analysis and Interpretation
Identifying patterns	Trust in Analysis and Interpretation
Analyzing qualitative data	Trust in Analysis and Interpretation